



The MAG

Portability and firepower are key distinguishing features of the different types of firearms. A handgun is easy to carry, but has limited firepower. However, a machine gun – a firearm fed by a belt or a magazine – is capable of powerful sustained fire but is heavy and bulky, as is its ammunition. This gun is therefore difficult to move around on the battlefield and several soldiers are needed to operate it. A good machine gun is one that does the best job of combining ease of handling and firepower. Historically, FN MAG is basically a gun that successfully found the best balance between mobility and firepower. During the Second World War, it became clear that troops had to be equipped with a machine gun that was both light enough to provide covering fire for a platoon but also capable of delivering sustained suppressive fire. In 1957, during the General Assembly of shareholders, there was talk of this new gun for the first time: “Following the study on equipment designed to fire the NATO standard cartridge, our technical services have recently developed a belt-fed gas-operated machine gun. The great interest that this gun generated in Sweden and in the UK where we presented it bodes well for its future.”¹⁵⁹

The firearm operates by using the combustion gases from the powder in each cartridge at a certain point in the barrel. A gas regulator enables the rate of fire to be adjusted to approximately 600 or 1,000 rounds per minute. Based on the principles of the German Army’s MG34, this air-cooled weapon has an interchangeable barrel. It is usually delivered with two barrels, so that one can be fired while the other cools.

Orders were made for the gun, shortly after presentation of the prototype. A decision was made on where to mass produce it from 1959. As the Board noted, “this plant has provided plenty of work for our design offices and tool shops.”

The FN MAG equipped armies from over 80 countries and provided reliable service on all kinds of terrain. The peak of its success came in 1976, when it was adopted by the US and called the M240.

Robust and reliable, the FN MAG quickly made its mark as the best General Purpose Machine Gun (GPMG). Its optimal combination of mobility and firepower made it a real battle-winning weapon.

Thanks to numerous updates, variants and optional equipment, the FN MAG kept pace with tactical and technological evolutions, while retaining the simplicity and reliability that made it an efficient firearm. Sophisticated mounting systems (bipods, tripods, anti-aircraft modules, etc.) allowed for better control of the MAG, including mounting it on land, naval and air vehicles. Since 1978, FN has specialised in mounting these machine guns on land vehicles, aircraft and naval vessels in increasingly sophisticated configurations. Its longstanding success can be ascribed to this ability to adapt to the actual combat situation.

As soon as they were marketed, the FAL and the MAG became standards of military weaponry.



Ernest Vervier

In the mid-1950s, Ernest Vervier took over from Dieudonné Saive to lead the research and development department. Besides designing the MAG, he launched the early research into the 5.56 mm calibre range of weapons.



⚡ Five-seveN® MK3 and FN HiPer® Pistols

Over the years, FN Herstal has established a lasting presence in the pistols market by developing a diverse range of products covering the calibres most commonly used by police forces: .45 ACP, 9mm, 5.7×28mm. The Five-seveN® MK3 and FN HiPer® Pistols highlight FN Herstal's capacity to constantly improve its models, alongside offering new high-performance systems.

↔ Deputy Sheriff in Richland County, South Carolina, with the FN® 509, 2018

With the FN® 509, FN Herstal provides law enforcement with a handgun that offers great accuracy. The pistol features a tapered firing pin, secure flat trigger, 17-round capacity magazine and a low-profile optical mounting system for rapid target acquisition.

The 2010s also saw the launch of the FN SCAR range in two calibres, for the Security market, and in the United States the FN 15 Tactical II came to market. It is the latest evolution of the FN 15 family of carbines. The upgrade to the existing platform included the addition of the Rail System, an enhanced lower receiver and a floating barrel, which is chrome-lined and cold hammer-forged to provide increased durability and performance.

In the mid-2010s, the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks led to new and specific requirements for police forces. In 2017, FN Herstal responded by developing a subcompact variant of the FN SCAR. Initially available in 5.56×45mm calibre, and then in 7.62×35mm/.300 BLK from 2018, this gun combines a compact architecture with firepower

to meet the ever-increasing demands of better armed and trained attackers. To ensure they are prepared for any eventuality, police forces are increasingly aware of the need to improve their firearms training. FN Herstal has satisfied this need by developing 'training' guns similar to a service gun in their sizes and shapes, although their internal mechanism does not allow the use of lethal ammunition. FN Herstal also offers digital systems developed for the military, such as the FN Expert module and, more recently, the FN VictoR, which is more adapted for integration on the pistol.

